A letter written

by the King of Nauarr, to *the three eſtates of* Fraunce:

Containing a moſt liuely deſcription of the diſcommodities and dangers of ciuill warre: and a very forcible perſwaſion to obedience, vnitie, and peace.

Together with a breefe declaration vpon the matters happened in *Fraunce* ſithence the 23. day of December. 1588.

Tranſlated out of French, by G. R.

AT LONDON

Printed by Thomas Purfoote, and are to be ſould at his ſhop ouer againſt S. Sepulchres Church without Newgate.

1589.

BODLEIANA · BIBLIOTHECA

¶ A Letter written by the King of Nauarr to the three eſtates of France, containing a declaration of the ſaid King, vpon the matters happened in France ſithens the 23. of December 1588.

MY Lords and Maiſters, vvhen I call to mind that this foure yeares ſpace I haue bene the argument of the tragœdies of *France*, the common talke of my neighbours, the ſubiect of ciuile arms, & by reaſon of theſe arms, of a world of miſeries: when I doe conſider that vpon a caſualtie to come, ſeparated as far from the thoughts of Frenchmen as from my deſire, ſome men haue cauſed this realme to feele the preſence of infinite calamities, and that vpon the vaine & imaginarie feare of my ſucceſſion to this eſtate, they haue framed and in a maner erected an vſurpation: when with theſe eies, which God hath principally giuen me to haue them alwaies open for the good of my countrie, beholding theſe continuall miſchiefs, I am conſtrained to ſee my countrie on fire, hir principall pillers burnt, hir beſt townes conſumed to aſhes, and that in ſteed of bringing water to quench theſe flames, to endeuour to ſaue that which yet remaineth ſound (as I deſire, and willingly would haue done, in ſuch ſort that it might neuer burſt foorth againe) they do enforce me, in ſpight of my teeth, to caſt my ſelfe into the fire, and to make my de-

fence almoſt as odious as the violences which thoſe men vſe that perſecute me: either I ſhould bee of all ſenceleſſe men the moſt voide of ſence that euer was, or elſe it muſt needs bee, that vpon conſideration of the publike eſtate my ſoule bee tormented a thouſand times a daye with vexations and greefes, ſuch as no hell is able to affourd the like: eſpecially ſeeing I knowe that of all theſe misfortunes the malitious make me the authour, the ignorant the cauſe, and I my ſelfe (though I may be very well forborne and pardoned in this caſe) do terme my ſelfe the occaſion. But as touching my particular eſtate, ſince it is my hap to be born in ſuch an age) when I lay before mee that which God hath done for mee in the beginning, middle, and continuance of theſe laſt troubles: howe many witneſſes he hath affourded me of the iuſtice of my cauſe and mine innocencie, not onely in Fraunce, but alſo in forreigne nations, not within the hearts of my friends, but euen within the mouthes of thoſe which are none of my wel-willers: not within the opinion of vulgare conceits, but (God knoweth) within the ſoule and conſcience of my king: how by many effects hee hath cauſed it to appeare that he hath care of me, hauing miraculouſly defended, ſaued, & aſſured me from the forces againſt which there was no likelihood that I ſhould be able to make head: ſurely if I were of an other ſpirit than I am, I ſhould haue as much reaſon to pleaſe my ſelfe with the particular of my cõdition, as the publike is greeuous vnto me: My lords and maiſters, I cannot do it, I will neuer account baſely of my countrie, I wil alwaies prefer the welfare thereof before mine owne: and they ſhall alwaies ſee that my miſhaps, my hinderances, and mine afflictions, ſhall runne before thoſe of my countrie. But neuertheleſſe I cannot conceale the contentment which I receaue, in that by all the occaſions which haue beene offered, I haue cauſed it to bee made manifeſt both by my actions, by my words, and by my writings, howe it greeues mee at the very heart to ſee the miſeries wherein we go about to imbarque our ſelues: were it not that the examples

paſſed

paſſed did make vs ſomewhat more circumſpect for that which is to come. This you know to be true, and *I* beleeue there is no man at this preſent ſo paſsionate, which can denie me this witneſſe which comforts me not a little, beeing fully perſuaded, that beſide the vprightneſſe of my cauſe, nothing hath more aſſwaged the wrath of God towardes mee, nothing hath mooued him more to defend mee, than this. But if it had pleaſed God to haue put into the hearts of the King my ſouereign, and of you my Lords, that *I* might haue beene called to the aſſemblie, which ſome of your deputies held at *Bloyes* (as truely me ſeemeth I ought to haue beene) and that I had beene permitted freely to haue propounded that which I take to be for the profit of this eſtate, *I* had cauſed it plainely to appeare, how I had not the deſire only in my heart, the words in my mouth, but the effects and deeds readie in my handes, how *I* ſeeke no ſtarting holes to ſhroud my ſelfe in, nor propoſitions coloured with faire words, to the which by no meanes I meane to tye my ſelfe. And to the contrary, that I haue a good reſolution, and earneſt affection to the greatneſſe of the King and realme, as much as may be, yea though it were with the loſſe of mine owne, and that when all the reſt ſhall bee diſpoſed, hee ſhall not neede to treat nor to capitulate with me: my conſcience aſſuring mee that nothing hath euer made mee to ſtand aloofe, but the conſideration of him, and regard of mine honour. But ſeeing this is not doone which might very well haue beene performed (and that France may count it for one of hir ouerſights, that ſhee hath had no better phyſitions than thoſe which delighte to continue hir ſickneſſe) I meane to giue you to vnderſtande by this diſcourſe, both that which I thinke to bee my dutie, as alſo that which I eſteeme neceſſary for the ſeruice of God, and the King my liege, and for the good of this realme: to the ende that all the ſubiects of this crowne may be inſtructed therein, and that all men may know for my diſcharge my intent and innocencie.

First I will represent vnto you mine estate: not for to glorifie my selfe (for let me make neuer so great reckoning of my selfe, God may abase me) nor for to tell you that I speake a cock-horsse and at much ease (the same God knoweth, wherein resteth my contentment, wherein I trust, and whervpon I principally rely) but to the end I may manifest vnto you two things: the one, The condition of these miserable warres, the aduantage that mine enemies haue had against me, how mightily they haue assailed me, how greatly they haue bene furthered thereby: that at least you may be forced to iudge without passion, that God hath not preserued mee against such huge forces without a miracle: and that this miracle should not haue bene, if innocency and good right of iustice had not bene on my side. The other that I may make you iudges, whether that which I now say, I speake of feare, whether I haue occasion to vse flattering words for dread of a more seuere chastisement, then that which I haue alreadie felt, whether it be the doubt of mine owne ruine that makes me complaine: or to the contrary whether it bee the true sence and feeling of the miseries of my countrie, the loue of peace, and greatnesse of *France*, which wresteth from mee this manner of speech. I should play the soldior, if I should tell you in order what armies within these foure yeares haue pursued me, that would cause you to thinke that I went about to recount vnto you my valure; No, that is not my intent, I would to God I had neuer bene a captaine, seing that my first training vp in arms must bee learned with so great losse. I should do far better to demaund of you what chiefe-tains are left in *France*, beside those which haue bene sent against me. I haue seene in foure yeares ten armies, ten lieutenants of the King, hauing attending them at their heeles the forces & strength of the goodliest kingdome of all Christendome. You take this for no glorie: it is so far from me to go about to withdraw you from this opinion, that my selfe doe tell you that of these ten armies, I haue had to doe in effect but with one, which I haue beaten and discomfited. And in this

this God did perticularly vſe my meanes for their ruine: but in all the other I haue not beene put to any labour at all: they haue beene vtterlye conſumed before they haue ſeene me: and I haue aſſoone had intelligence of their diſperſing, as of their leuying. The Angell the ſcourge of God hath taken from them the power and meanes to annoy me. It is not to mee to whome the glorye heereof appertaineth: I haue ſhewed you almoſt nothing of mine owne: but in effect, you may vnderſtand of your deputies, which are in thoſe prouinces, where they of the religion haue had ſome places of retreate, what ſucceſſe their exploits haue had. Conſider the eſtate wherein they ſtood before the warre, and that wherein they are at this houre: and iudge aduiſedly, to what end hath ſerued this foure ye ares ſpace the loſſe of the liues of a million of men, the expences of a mine of golde, the ruine of the people of *Fraunce*: inſomuch as they had made a better market, and more eaſie to be compaſſed, if they had attempted the diſcomfiture of the *Ottomanes*, or to ioine all the realmes of Chriſtendome to our crowne?

It is impoſſible but that theſe things ſhould mooue you, and that you ſhould note heereby that this is an extraordinarie worke and effect. Moreouer I ſay this vnto you, that as this ought wholy to cauſe you to lift your eyes and hands to heauen, acknowledging that if you fight againſt God, you fight in vaine: in like ſorte ought I to powre foorth my praiers before him, that hee will keepe mee from being puft vp with theſe proſperities, and to attribute the glory heereof to him alone: being moſt aſſured, that if I do otherwiſe, he will turne his louing countenance from me, and will in two moneths giue more aduantage to my enemies againſt me, then I haue in foure yeare found fauour at his hands.

I hope by his grace not to behaue my ſelfe otherwiſe then dutifullye. And therefore my meaning is that this diſcourſe ſhall proclaime throughout all the world in my name: That to day I am as ready to requeſt of the King my Lorde, peace, the quiet of his realme, and mine owne reſt, as euer I was

heeretofore. I had at the beginning of theſe warres, regard of my conſcience and honour, which I alwaies haue, & yet doe beſeech his Maieſtie to leane to me intier. The wars haue diminiſhed nothing therefrom, neither haue they added any thing, that may make me vnwilling to giue eare to a motion of peace. I do therefore moſt humbly beſeech it: and as touching you my lords & maiſters, I thinke if you had loued the king, if you had loued his eſtate, if you had diſerned theſe euils and their remedies, you ſhould haue cõmaunded your deputies which were at this aſſemblie to haue begun & finiſhed their concluſions for the obtaining thereof. I intreate & admoniſh you to further it as much as you may.

I know very well that in their pamphlets they haue inſerted this generall maxime, That there ought to be but one religion in one realme, and that the foundation of an eſtate is pietie, which cannot be in that place, where God is diuerſly, and by conſequence badly ſerued. I affirme it is ſo: I ſee many people complaine thereof, few that will ſeeke to redreſſe it. But I haue alwaies ſubmitted my ſelfe to reaſon, and yet do offer, that if they will trie the vſuall and accuſtomed waye in theſe caſes, and if there be any extraordinarie waies that they will labour to ſearche them out: both I and all they of the religion will alwaies conforme our ſelues to that which a free generall counſell ſhall determine; this is the true way, this is the only way which hath in all ages beene put in practiſe, by this way we will ſuffer, and with patience endure to be condemned. But to beleeue that by dint of ſword this may be obteined of vs: I thinke (before God) that it is a thing altogither impoſſible, and in trueth the ſucceſſe and euent doth ſhew no leſſe.

It were but ſuperfluous to diſcourſe at large of this matter, being already ſufficiently argued and diſputed. They haue often ſummoned me to change my religion: but after what manner? with the dagger at my throte. If I had had no reſpect vnto my conſcience, yet the regarde of mine honour would haue withheld mee from conſenting in that ſort. Was

there euer any of that opinion, that a man might kil a Turke, a naturall Pagan, kill him (I say) for his religion, before hee hath assaied to conuert him? yet I suppose that my greatest enemies, doe not thinke mee to be more estranged from the feare and knowledge of GOD, then a Turke, and notwithstanding they are more cruell against mee, then against this infidell.

What would the most affectionate vnto the Catholike religion report of me, if hauing liued this thirty yeare after one sort, they should suddenly see me change my religiō, in hope of a kingdome? What would they report of mee, that haue seene and tried my courage, if shamfully I should abandon for feare, the manner wherein I haue serued God from the very day of my natiuitie? These be reasons which touch the honour of this world. But to come to the maine point; What conscience hauing beene nourished, instructed, and trained vp in a profession of faithe, would vnaduisedly without anye speech or reasoning thereof, in a moment betake himselfe to the contrary side? No (my lords and masters) that shall neuer be the king of *Nauarr*, were there thirtie kingdomes to be gained thereby: so farre is it from him to goe against his conscience for the hope of one alone. Teach me better, I am not selfewild; take some course to instruct me, you shall profit thereby at length; for if you shewe mee anye other trueth, then that which I now beleeue, I will submit my selfe, and doo more then that; for I am sure there is not any one of my partie, which will not likewise yeeld himselfe together with me. You shall make a goodly gaine to GOD, and notable conquest of consciences, in vanquishing mee alone. But to feede vs with wordes without reason, and to goe about to induce vs to bee perswaded by the onelye countenance of some; iudge (my Lordes and Maisters) if this bee reasonable.

But to let this passe; if you simplie desire my welfare, I thanke you, if you doe not long for my conuersion; for feare least one daye I shoulde by violence constrayne you

to alter your religion: you do me wrong to iudge ſo, ſeing I haue alwaies miſliked ſuch kinde of proceedings: the maner of my liuing and behauiour, both with my freends and with mine enemies, at home and in the field, may giue ſufficient proofe of my diſpoſicion: the townes where *I* nowe am, and which of late I wonne, can beare me record thereof. Neither is it likely that a handfull of people of my religion, can enforſe an infinite number of catholikes to that paſſe, whereto this infinite number hath not beene able to reduce this handfull. And if I haue with ſo ſmall forces fought and ſuſteined this quarrell ſo long time: what may they then do who with ſuch and ſo great meanes may oppoſe themſelues moſt forciblie againſt my conſtraint, conſiſting of ſo ſmall ability? It were no wiſedõe for me to take that courſe. That matter is not at this time in queſtion: I am not as yet in degree, (God be thanked) to doo you either good or euill, neither ſhall *I* euer (if hee pleaſe) bee brought to that tryall, nor you to that hazard. Wee haue all one King, who no doubt will leaue good order for the ſucceſſion, whenſoeuer the extremitie of age ſhall end his dayes. In the meane ſeaſon let vs not trouble our ſelues ſo much with a thing ſo long to come, that wee forget the preſent eſtate wherein conſiſteth our ſpeciall welfare.

God hath cauſed this day the depth of their deſignements and endeuours which troubled this eſtate, to be diſcouered: hee hath alſo laid open my intents. None of you, none of *Fraunce* is ignorant heereof. Is it not a miſerable thing that there is not one from the leaſt to the greateſt in this realme, who ſeeth not this miſcheife, who exclaimeth not againſt theſe broiles, who termeth them not the continuall and mortall feuer of this eſtate, and yet none openeth his mouth to find remedy therefore! That in all this aſſemblie of *Bloyes*, none dare pronounce this ſacred word, Peace, that worde, in whoſe effect conſiſteth the good of this realme? Beleeue me (my Lords and maiſters) this wonderfull ſecuritie, and fatall amaſednesſe, is one of the greateſt preſages and forewar-

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nings that God hath ſent a declining eſtate vnto this relme.

Our eſtate is extreame ſicke, euerye one ſeeth it: by all ſignes and apparances it is iudged, that the cauſe of this euill is the ciuill warre; a malady almoſt incurable, of which no eſtate did euer yet recouer: or if it hath beene releeued, if this appoplexie hath not ſpred ouer all, it hath at leaſt beene conuerted into a palſey, to the vtter ſpoile of halfe of the bodye. What remedy then? no other then peace: which affourdeth comfort to the heart of this realme: which by orderly dyet expelleth the rebellious and noyſome humors, purgeth corruptions, and repleniſheth the body with pure blood, good humoures, and ſound mindes, which in ſumme, cauſeth it to flouriſh and liue. This is the operation which peace worketh, which ought to be craued at Gods hands for the onely remedy, for the onely meanes of health: who ſo ſeeketh other waies in ſteed of curing will poiſon this realme.

I then coniure you all by this writing, aſwell Catholikes ſeruitors of the King my Lorde, as thoſe which are not ſo: I appeale vnto you as *Frenchmen*, I ſummon you to take pittie of this eſtate; to take pittie of your ſelues, whoſe ſteps are vndermined in ſuch ſorte, that if you doo not looke to your ſelues betimes, ruine and deſtruction will ouertake you: to take pittie of me, whom you conſtraine perforce to beholde, to ſuffer, and to doo thoſe things, which were it not in the middeſt of theſe armes, I had rather dye a thouſand deaths then to behold, ſuffer, or doo. I coniure you to diſperſe and abandon all at once, the miſerable humors and effects of violence and warres, which doe rente and diſmember this renouned eſtate, which doe withdrawe vs, ſome by force, others ouerwillingly from the obedience of our King: which cauſes vs to imbrue our ſelues with the blood one of another: & which hath already ſo often made vs the laughing-ſtocke of ſtrangers, and in the end will make vs to bee theyr conqueſt. I coniure you (I ſay) to acquite vs of all theſe bitter greeuances, to reſtore to vs the pleaſant calme of peace and vnitie, to incertaine againe obedient and orderly minds,

and to poſſeſſe your ſelues with the ſpirit of concord: where-by the ſmalleſt eſtates haue become mightie Empires, and ours hath along time flouriſhed the moſt renowned king-dome of all Chriſtendome.

Although I haue a thouſand and a thouſand occaſions, particularlye to complaine of thoſe of the houſe of *Guiſe*, of them (ſay I) for my kindred, and kindred ſo neere, that beſide thoſe of my name, I haue none neerer. And although that in generall, Fraunce hath more occaſion then I: yet God know-eth what a greefe it was to me, to ſee them take that courſe which my heart alwaies gaue mee, would neuer ſorte vnto their honour. God is my witneſſe I tooke them to bee com-modious and profitable for the Kings ſeruice: and (I may ſay) auaileable alſo for my ſelfe, ſeeing they had the honor to be of my kindred, & that my degree was aboue & before theirs. I was alwaies, and ſhould haue beene verye glad to haue ſeene them imploy thoſe meanes that God and nature had affourded them, for the good and faithfull ſeruice of them, whom they ought dutifully to haue ſerued: in ſteede whereof, when their wicked counſels did enforſe them to a contrary kind of dealing, there were in the worlde (though not my ſelfe) that did laugh at their miſfortune, and woulde haue bin ful wel apaid to haue ſeen the diſpleaſure, declara-tions, & armes of the king my Lord conuerted againſt them.

Let vs not waxe proud, neither the one ſide nor the other: as for my part although I haue receiued more fauour of God in this warre, then in all the former: and that whereas the o-ther two factions (what hard hap is it that I am forced to terme them ſo?) haue weakened themſelues: mine in ap-parance is ſtrengthened: yet I know very well that preſent-lye, and as often as I ſhall ſet aſide my dutie: God will leaue to bleſſe me any longer: and I ſhould wholye neglect it, if without reaſon, and of a iolitie of heart, I ſhould oppoſe my ſelfe againſt my king, and trouble the quiet of his countrie.

As touching them, who during theſe foure laſt yeares haue loued armes better then peace: who haue firſt renued the

warre

warre in this estate,& haue erected the third faction,vnworthie the fidelitie of *Fraunce*,and(to go a little further)vnworthie the loialtie of their Grandfathers. Seeing God hath shewed them by his iudgements,that their dealings are not agreeable to his will: seeing naythelesse that he hath touched the heart of our King,to receaue thē to his accustomed mildnesse and clemencie(as himselfe hath declared)let them yet at the last hould themselues contented & quiet. We haue all of vs offered and indured harmes inough,we haue bin this foure yeare togither continually besotted,outragious,& almost starkemad. Is not this enough,trow you? hath not God sufficiently beaten and corrected vs,both the one part & the other,to cause vs to awake from our careleſse securitie,to make vs wise in the end,and to suppresse our furies?

But if after this it be lawfull that as a most humble & loiall subiect of the King my Lord, I may giue some good aduise to those which may counsell him: who hath euer heard it spoken,that that state can endure,where there are two factions within it, alwaies vp in armes,and ready the one to assaile the other? what shall then become of ours,where there are three? how may a man perswade the king to raise ciuill warre,and that against two parties all at one instant? There is no president, no historie, no reason that can assure him a good issue and euent hereof. It behoueth him therefore to make a peace,and that a generall peace with all his subiects, aswell of the one side as of the other,aswell of the one as of the other religiō,or at least that he reconcile,& reunite those vnto him which are least estranged from his obedience. And to that purpose let euery man iudge of mine intent: behold how I intreate for a cōmon good:how I do not labour to animate the King against his subiects,which haue beene of this goodly league: and yet you may know (my Lords) that if I would vndertake to do it,& it were needfull to afford him my seruice(as I will do,if he cōmaund me thereto)in outward apparance I am like to crosse many of their designements, and easily to curbe and keepe them short in their enterprises,

I appeale at this time to all the reſt of our eſtates, who haue remained behoulders of our follies, I appeale to our nobilitie, to our cleargie, to our townes, to our people, theſe be they to whom I ſpeake, that they will conſider what will become of Fraunce, if we runne on headlong as we haue begun: what countenance this eſtate will cary, if this miſchiefe continue: what the nobilitie ſhall doo, if our gouernment be altered, as it will bee vndoubtedlye (being already in a fayre waye towards it) if the townes for feare of the partakers againſt them, ſhall be conſtrained to ſettle and fortifie themſelues within their gates, not to ſuffer any man to command ouer them, and to cantonne themſelues after the manner of the *Zwitzers*. I aſſure my ſelfe, there is none of that minde as yet: but the warre in proceſſe of time may force them to it. And to my great greefe, I ſee alredy ſuch beginnings ſpringing amongſt them, which outwardly make ſemblance of ſo ſweete and pleaſant ſhewe, that the beſt and moſt loyall burgeſſes of the world will eaſily ſuffer themſelues to be caryed away therewithall.

What ſhall become of the townes, when vnder a vaine likelyhood of libertie they haue turned topſie turuie the order of this worthie eſtate? when they ſhall haue the nobilitie theyr enemies; the countrey rounde about repining at them, and deſirous againe and againe, to ſacke and ſpoyle them, imagining that within their cofers and ſhops, they haue treaſure and richeſſe without content or nomber?

What ſhall the principall inhabitants doo, which holde the offices of the Monarchie, of the Exchequer, of iuſtice, of ciuill policie, or of armes? Let euery one recount in the middeſt of their domeſticall fortune, that the aſſurance of theyr eſtate is cleane gone, if the monarchy be ouerthrowne. Who ſhall allow them the free exerciſe and trade of Merchandize? Who ſhall warrant them their poſſeſſions in the field? who ſhall ſuppoſe the authoritie of their iuſtice? what decrees ſhall they eſtabliſh? who ſhall commaund ouer theyr armies? to be breefe, what ſhall be their order? euen miſe-

rable abuſes. This furie may indure for a moneth or two in the ſame ſort, as it is ſaid that the feuer nouriſheth the ſicke bodye: but to thinke that vpon the foundations of wrathe & vengeance, an aſſured intelligence, and durable forme of gouernmene may be eſtabliſhed: that can neuer be. It hath neuer beene either ſeene or read, that an eſtate hath bin changed, without the ruine of hir townes, which are alwaies the principall props and pillers thereof.

And thou people, when the nobilitie and townes ſhall be deuided, what reſt ſhalt thou enioye? people, the garner and ſtorehouſe of a realme: the fertile fields of this eſtate, whoſe trauaile nouriſheth Princes, whoſe ſweate dooth water them, whoſe occupations doo maintaine them, whoſe induſtrie doth affourde them delicacies for reare bankets: to whom ſhalt thou haue recourſe, when the nobilitie ſhall oppreſſe thee: when the townes ſhall exact and leuie contributions of thee? For the King? he ſhall not be able to commaund ouer the one or the other ſide: for the officers of his Iuſtice? where ſhall they bee found? for his Lieutenants? What power ſhall they retaine? for the Mayor of a towne? what authoritie ſhall hee haue ouer the nobilitie? for the chiefe of the nobilitie? what order will there bee amongſt them? lamentable confuſion, diſorder, and miſery ouer all. And thus behold the effects of warre. *Populi in Prin. cipis bonoſtium.*

It proceeds not of forgetfulneſſe, that I ſpeake nothing of the clergie. Neither would I ſpeake of them at all, miſdoubting that they will not take it in good parte, becauſe they eſteeme me their enemie more then I am; but that in truthe I haue more cauſe to find my ſelfe agreeued with their order, then with both the other orders of *Fraunce*, I way it not: there be ſome good men amongſt them. As touching their profeſſion and religion, in ſome things I am contrary to them: in nothing their enemie: in other things we are of one minde, ſaue where they concerne the conſeruation of the priuiledges of the Church of *Fraunce* againſt the Pope. Howſoeuer it be, though I were ſo highlye in their bookes that they

would affourd mee all the commendations in the worlde, yet would I tread their praises vnder my feete at this present, being carryed by a more vehement consideration, to wit, of the seruice I owe to my King, and dutie to this estate. In the meane season, what hope they? to make warre, and paye their tenthes in those countries where they haue the greatest credit, (for as for those places where my authoritie stretches, I possesse in a manner all they ought to haue, neyther may I remedie it, but in processe of time) all the country being ouergrowne with dissention, howe shall they come by any thing?

Let them regarde what course our townes, our people, our nobilitie do take. Let them consider (who haue or ought to haue godlinesse in great account) if there be any thing so contrary thereto, as vice and disorder: if there be anye thing that brings men so faire out of square, as the licentious libertie of ciuill warre. Let them iudge at last, if they, which haue not beene inriched nor increased but by peace, by order, by obedience to our Kinges, and by deuotion, shall not hereafter goe to decay by warre, by confusion, by impietie, and by mutinous disobedience.

Hauing spoken to all men in particular, I will yet saye this in generall. Bee it that God blesse the purposes of our King, and that he reduce all the mutinies of his realme to an end: it were a lamentable case that he should cause all those to be punished which doo deserue it. What? shall hee take reuenge of a great parte of his townes, of a great parte of his subiects? that were to much, that were a mischiefe, that were a madnesse, sent by God into this realme for the punishment of our transgressions. Hee must beare no more displeasure to our people, & to our townes, then to a franzike fellow when hee fighteth, or to a mad man when he runneth about starke naked.

Bee it to the contrarye that those of the league shall strengthen themselues in such sort, that they shall be able to resist him (as surely there is some likelihood, & I feare me that

his

his patience is their principall force: if God will he may exercise his iudgements vpon vs, and wee know not whether wee or they shall feele it first.) What will be sayd of Frenchmen?

What shame will it bee to vs, that wee haue chased away our Kings? a staine that neuer spotted the garments of our fathers, and the onelye aduantage that we haue of all the subiects of Christendome.

In the meane season is not this a great inconuenience for me that I am constrained to remaine idle? They haue thrust armes into my handes perforce; against whom shall *I* imploye them at this time? against my King? God hath touched his hart, he hath taken vpon him the quarrell in my behalfe against those of the league. Wherefore should *I*, which publish and perswade peace in *Fraunce*, aggreuate the King against them: and by bringing my forces into the field, seeme to endeuour to take awaye from him his gentle forbearance, and from them all hope of reconciliation. Beholde the straight whereinto I am driuen: for if I continue quiet, eyther they shall make an agreement to my cost (as *I* haue seene it already twise or thrise to happen) or else they shall so weaken the King, and make themselues so strong; that after his ruine, I shall haue no more force or abilitie to impeache mine owne ouerthrow.

My Lordes, and maisters, I speake also to you, whome I know to my vnspeakeable sorrow, not to be composed all of one humor. The declarations of the King my Lord, and especially his last, do sufficiently manifest, that there are some of your deputies, and almost the greatest part at the deuotion of other, then of the King.

If you haue neuer so small iudgement, you cannot but beleeue with mee, that I am in great hazarde, that the Kinge is so, that the thirde partye is so, that your selues in generall and each one in particular are so. We are all within one house which is now a falling; wee are all within one

ſhip which is readie to ſinke, and there is no remedie, that can be imagined but onely peace, let them ſearche for other as long as they liſt.

In concluſion then, hauing better (as I may ſay) and more intereſt in this then all you, I demaund peace of the King my Lord in the name of all: I demaund it for my ſelfe, for thoſe of the league, for all Frenchmen, for Fraunce it ſelfe. Who ſo demaunds it otherwiſe dooth not well. I proteſt to yeeld my ſelfe more tractable then at any time heeretofore. If I haue at any time beene harde to be dealt withall, I will ſerue at this preſent for an example to others by obedience, which I will ſhew to my King. But hauing ſo often and ſundry times proteſted and vttered that which is my dutie, and that which is for our common profit: I will nowe declare, firſt to thoſe
1. which are of the King my Soueraigne his ſide, that if they do not order themſelues with me, if they doo not accord to this ſacred deliberation, not to make warre againſt the league, or thoſe of *Lorraine*, not againſt *Parris*, *Orleance*, or *Tholouſe*: but againſt thoſe which hinder peace, & the obedience due to this Crowne: that then they alone ſhall be guiltie of the miſchiefes which ſhall betide the King and his realme: and that I on the contrary ſhall be blameleſſe, hauing diſcharged my fidelitie to my Prince, whoſe hurt as much as in me lies, I do and will withſtand, yea though himſelfe were careleſſe thereof.

2. And as touching thoſe which ſtill reteine the name and partie of the league, I coniure them as Frenchmen heereunto: I would willingly commaund them, yet as thoſe which haue the honour to be of my kindred; whoſe Fathers (I am aſſured) would haue taken ſuch a commaundement for a very great fauour. But if this be not doone after this ſorte, I my ſelfe (as the cheefe Prince and greateſt Magiſtrate next the King in *Fraunce*) will bring to paſſe, that they ſhall haue enough to doo to looke vnto themſelues: and reſt content with their owne priuate loſſe for a publike benefit: that they ſhall tame and bridle their paſſions, their quarrels, their reuenge,

uenge, and their ambition, for the good of Fraunce their mo-
ther, for the seruice of their King, and for their owne quiet
and ours. Beside this, if they doe otherwise, I hope that God
will not altogether abandon the King, that he will not exe-
cute his wrath vpon him, nor make him loth to call his ser-
uants about him, as my selfe the first, who doe desire no
other title. And they which shall come for this purpose,
shall haue power enough, and assured right for to aide and
assist him, to abolish the memorye of these men out of the
world, and out of their natiue countrie of Fraunce.

Finallye hauing doone my dutie in this so solemne prote-
station which I haue made, if I perceiue both the one and the
other so hardened, or so badlye affected, that none of them
are mooued heereby: I will call God to witnesse of my actio-
ons passed, and to my ayde for those to come. And you true
seruants of my King: you true Frenchmen, worthy of as much
honour as I inioye, to bee the cheefe Princes of this realme:
though all the world had conspired his ruine, I protest before
God and men, that to the hazard of a thousand liues, I will
assay all alone to vphold it.

I call to my assistance all those which haue this goldy de-
sire, of what condition or qualitie soeuer they bee; hoping,
that if God blesse my indeuoures, so much courage as I shew
in interprising heereof, so much fidelitie and constancie shall
I haue in atchieuing the end, rendring to my King my obe-
dience, to my countrie my deuoire, to my selfe my rest and
contentment, together with the liberty of all good men.

And in the meane while till it shall please God to giue
leasure vnto the King my Lord to take order for the affaires
of his estate, establishing peace, which is so necessary, I doo
affirme (as he that hath the honour to hold the cheefest place
of account vndet his obedience) that if I cannot serue him so
well in his absence, as to cause his authoritie throughout all
his realme to be receaued: I wil at least in part bring to passe
that in those places where my power and abilitie extendeth,
they shall acknowledge it. And for that intent I receaue into

my protection and sauegard, all those, of what qualitie, religion, or condition that they be, aswell of the nobilitie, of the cleargie, of the townes, as of the people, that will linke and vnite themselues to me in this good and honourable resolution: not permitting that their bodies or goods shall be touched in any maner or sorte, otherwise then in time of perfect peace, and when the lawes of the realme haue accustomed to deale with them.

And although that more then any other I greeue to see the difference of religion, & that more then any other I wish it remedied: neuertheless, acknowledging that this must come from God alone, (whose succour heerin we must needs attend) and not to enforce it by armes or by violence: I protest before God, and in this protestation doo pawne my faith and honour (which by his grace I haue hetherto kept vndefiled) that in the same maner as I haue not endured, that they should enforce mine owne conscience: in like sorte I will neuer suffer nor permit, that the catholiks shall by constraint be drawne from theirs, nor from the exercise of their religion. Declaring further, that in those townes which togither with me shall persist in this minde, and shall subiect themselues vnder the obedience of the King my Lord, and my authoritie, I will not indure that anye thing shall be innouated, eyther in the politike estate, or in the church, except in as much as it shal concerne euery mans libertie. Taking againe aswell the persons as the goods of the Catholikes, and especially of the ecclesiasticall sort vnder my protection & sauegard. Hauing learned long agoe, that the true and onelye meanes to reunite the people, to reduce them to the seruice of God, and to establish pietie in anye estate, are mildnesse, peace, and good examples: not warre, nor discord: and that by the disorder of warre, vices and all maner of wickednesse doo grow vp in the world.

The L. of Nauar pawneth his faith now to suffer the Catholike by constraint of their Consciences to forced to alter the exercise of their Religion.

Giuen at *Chatelleraut*, the 4. of *March*. 1589.

FINIS.